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Agenda items 124 and 71 (b)

Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007

Human rights questions: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/60/L.28

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

1. Under the terms of operative paragraphs 4, 5, 6, 8 and 11 of draft resolution A/C.3/60/L.28, the General Assembly would:

(a) Decide that the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities shall hold, within existing resources, prior to the sixty-first session of the General Assembly, two sessions in 2006, one of 15 working days from 16 January to 3 February, in order to achieve a complete reading of the draft text of a convention prepared by the Chairman of the Committee, and one of 10 working days from 7 to 18 August;

(b) Underline the importance of further strengthening the cooperation and coordination between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat in order to provide technical support to the work of the Committee, and invite them to provide, in advance of the meetings of the Committee, background documentation to assist Member States and observers in the negotiation of a draft convention, and to organize, in close connection and timing with the meetings and

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venue of the Committee, meetings of experts and seminars in relation to the draft convention, within existing resources;

(c) Request the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with the facilities necessary for the performance of its work, and in this context invite the Secretary-General to reallocate resources to the United Nations Programme on Disability so as to provide support to the negotiations on a draft convention;

(d) Request the Secretary-General to explore and implement innovative measures, within existing resources and in consultation with organizations of persons with disabilities and the Bureau of the Committee, for the provision of selected documents of the Committee in formats accessible to participants with visual and hearing disabilities;

(e) Request the Secretary-General to disseminate widely to non-governmental organizations all available information on accreditation procedures, modalities and supportive measures for their participation in the work of the Committee, as well as the criteria for the financial assistance that is available through the voluntary fund.

2. In accordance with operative paragraph 4 of the draft resolution, the Committee would hold its seventh session for 15 working days in New York from 16 January to 3 February 2006 and its eighth session for 10 working days from 7 to 18 August 2006. Two meetings per day would be held for each session, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, with interpretation services in all six languages. Documentation requirements for the seventh session are estimated at 70 pages of pre-session, three pages of in-session and 75 pages of post-session documentation, and for the eighth session are estimated at two pages of pre-session, 50 pages of in-session and 100 pages of post-session documentation, to be issued in all six languages.

3. Servicing of the Committee has been included in the draft calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations for 2006, under the heading "Bodies whose mandates are to be presented for renewal to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session" (see A/60/32, annex), which is before the Assembly for its approval. The proposed two sessions for 2006 would comprise 50 meetings, consisting of 10 meetings more than the Committee held in 2005. The total number of pages of documentation for the seventh and eighth sessions is estimated at 300 pages, which is 250 pages less than the total documentation requirements in 2005.

4. The 15 working days for the seventh session called for in the draft resolution would require adding one week to the two weeks included in the draft calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations for 2006. Therefore, should the draft resolution be adopted, on the assumption that the mandate of the Committee would be renewed by the General Assembly at its sixtieth session, the conference-servicing costs for an additional week of meetings of the seventh session of the Committee are estimated at $118,400.

5. In connection with the phrases "within existing resources" and "reallocate resources", as referenced in paragraph 1 (b), (c) and (d) above, the attention of the Committee is drawn to the provision of part B, section VI of General Assembly resolution 45/248, in which the Assembly reaffirmed that the Fifth Committee is the appropriate Main Committee of the General Assembly entrusted with

responsibilities for administrative and budgetary matters, and reaffirmed also the role of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

6. Provision has been made in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007 for substantive servicing of the Ad Hoc Committee. It is expected that additional daily subsistence allowance in the amount of $29,600 would arise to provide for the attendance of 15 participants at the Committee meeting in New York, which will be funded through voluntary contributions. With regard to the organization of meetings of experts and seminars in relation to the draft convention, it is also anticipated that the associated costs that would arise will be funded through voluntary contributions.

7. It will be recalled that, under the procedures established by the General Assembly in its resolutions 41/213 and 42/211, a contingency fund has been established for each biennium to accommodate additional expenditures derived from legislative mandates not provided for in the programme budget. Under this procedure, if additional expenditures were proposed that exceed the resources available from the contingency fund, the activities concerned would be implemented only through the redeployment of resources from low-priority areas or modification of existing activities. Otherwise, such additional activities would have to be deferred to a later biennium.

8. Additional provisions of $118,400 (representing $111,400 for section 2 and $7,000 for section 29D of the proposed programme budget) would be required over and above the resources initially proposed for the biennium 2006-2007, for servicing of the additional week of meetings of the seventh session of the Committee. It is not possible at this stage to identify activities within sections 2 and 29D of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007 that could be terminated, deferred, curtailed or modified during the biennium to meet the total additional requirement of $118,400. This would represent a charge against the contingency fund and, as such, would require appropriations for the biennium 2006-2007 to be approved by the General Assembly at its sixtieth session.